

A1 -- Surprisingly, the linkage of the frame to the sole and upper makes it possible to notably reinforce the latter in the area of the frame, despite the flexibility of the frame, and to transmit the selected forces. --

Please replace the paragraph appearing on page 7, lines 19, to page 8, line 2, with the following paragraph:

A2 -- The seams 21 can be merged with the continuous seams 22 of the upper for aesthetic reasons. The assembly of the lower ends of the frame to the upper 2 can be made by a low peripheral seam, as shown in FIG. 5, and/or by means of the insole 7 on which these ends 13, 16 are fixed by adhesive and/or nails. FIG. 5 shows the flexible frame 10 connected to the lasting allowance of the upper 2 between the insole 7 and the external sole 4. In any event, the assembly of at least the lower ends of the frame to the upper is depicted by reference numeral 24 in FIG. 5. --

In the Claims

Please amend claims 1, 9, 13, and 14 as follows:

A3 *Dut B* 1. (Amended) A sports boot, especially for gliding sports, comprising:
an outer sole and an external upper covering a user's foot and lower leg, the external

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upper comprising a flexible frame made of a flexible, substantially non-stretchable material, arranged along determinate directions of forces transmitted during use of the boot, said flexible frame being affixed to both the external upper and the outer sole.

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9. (Amended) A sports boot according to claim 1, wherein for a conventional assembly, with the upper having a lasting allowance between an insole and the outer sole, each of the lower ends of the frame is fixed to the lasting allowance.

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~~13~~ (Amended) A sports boot, especially for gliding sports, comprising an outer sole and an external upper overlying the outer sole and covering a user's foot and lower leg, the external upper comprising a flexible frame made of a substantially non-stretchable material and affixed to the upper and sole, comprising a dorsal portion, extending vertically at the rear of the lower leg, and comprising at least one lateral portion, extending laterally along the foot, connected to said dorsal portion and to the sole, at each of its ends.

14. (Amended) A sports boot, especially for gliding sports, comprising an outer sole and an external upper overlying the outer sole and covering a user's foot and lower leg, the upper including a flexible frame made of a substantially non-stretchable material and arranged so as to provide a predetermined moment of inertia along predetermined directions.

Please add new claims 21-28 as follows:

-- 21. A sports boot according to claim 1, wherein the flexible frame comprises a dorsal portion extending from the outer sole substantially up to a top end of the external upper at about mid-height of a tibia area of the boot, and at least one lateral arm laterally connecting the upper end of the dorsal portion to one side of the boot.

22. A sports boot according to claim 13, wherein the external upper extends above an ankle region to about a middle region of a tibia of the user.

23. A sports boot according to claim 14, wherein the external upper extends above an ankle region to about a middle region of a tibia of the user.

(24). A sports boot comprising:

an outer sole; and

an external upper overlying said outer sole to cover a user's foot and lower leg, said external upper comprising a flexible frame made of a substantially non-stretchable material and affixed to said external upper and said outer sole, said flexible frame comprising a dorsal portion extending upwardly above an ankle region at a rear of the lower leg, and further comprising at least one elongated lateral portion extending laterally forwardly from said dorsal portion and spaced above said external sole, said lateral portion of said flexible frame being connected to said external sole proximate an area of a metatarsophalangeal joint of the user's foot.)

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25. A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein said substantially non-stretchable material comprises a polymer.

26. A sports boot according to claim 25, wherein said polymer comprises a member selected from the group consisting of polyvinylchloride, polyamide, polyethylene, and polyurethane.

27. A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein said at least one lateral portion and said dorsal portion of said flexible frame are formed as unitary.

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28. A method of assembling a sports boot, in which the sports boot includes an outer sole and an external upper overlying the outer sole to cover a user's foot and lower leg, said method comprising:

affixing a flexible frame made of a substantially non-stretchable material and to the external upper and the outer sole, the flexible frame comprising a dorsal portion extending upwardly above an ankle region at a rear of the lower leg, and further including at least one elongated lateral portion extending laterally forwardly from the dorsal portion and spaced above the external sole;

laying flat said external upper and said affixed flexible frame; and
connecting said lateral portion of said flexible frame to said external sole proximate an area of a metatarsophalangeal joint of the user's foot. --